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## THE WATERCOLOR SOCIETY.

One's first impulse, when entering the Waldorf-Astoria improvised gallery of the American Watercolor Society Exhibition is to complain of the inadequate facilities to show the pictures. Everything looks cramped. A second thought is further one of disappointment at seeing some of the examples shown. If it is true that over three hundred numbers sent in were rejected, the query arises, why not make it 325 or 350, which would have greatly helped the exhibition—but then the membership favor would stand in the way. For why should place be given to sheets like Satterlee's or those plastered on bridges of Carlton T. Chapman's, not to mention a few others?

Possibly by hypnotic influence of the showplace, forefelt by the artists, there is a good deal of pretty work, Clinedienst's price picture being the prettiest of them all, and not deserving the W. T. Evans prize, to be given "for the most meritorious watercolor in the exhibition"—which it isn't. The delicate fibre of W. Granville Smith is also leading him, I fear, too close to prettiness (see No. 106), which would be a great pity, as the artist has virility and strength. So is No. 65, by Wiles, pretty, and nothing more; of Leon Moran we expect nothing else. Yet the "off and on" gentry, and society folks may grant the successful banner to these very concoctions.

But we must look at the collection with other eyes.

There is much that attracts attention because of sterling worth. The Moser contributions are excellent and this Washington artist, president of his local Watercolor Society, does honor to the out of town talent. A townsman of his, Walter Paris, gives in No. 227, one of the best city views in a blizzard, ever seen.

Speaking of winter subjects reminds me of a story told me by Mr. Shaw of "the Shaw prize" fame. In his summer country home he has none but winter views, which make the whole house cool and delightful on the hottest day, and, without screens, not a mosquito enters the house. He must have some pictures by the Albany artist, Walter Palmer, whose forte is "Winter—ruler of the inverted year," and some good snow scenes are shown here from his brush.

Glen Newell has a good cattle piece, No. 145, even if it is skied, and the Rehn contributions, three in number, deserve unstinted praise. Lathrop holds to his laurels, and Sterner adds to his own, with "The Bowl of Oranges," No. 7, and "The Blizzard," No. 252. Freer, Farrer and Fenn, have excellent work, although the latter's Alhambra scene, No. 149, could with advantage be reduced in size.

Gruppé, the Dutch "Uitlander," sent in one of the best landscapes in the collection. It is an atmospheric Dutch canal scene, a perfect study of nature.

There is enough good work to go on further. There is Schilling with the smiling verdure of Spring, No. 131; a soft and insinuating coast scene by C. Myles Collier, No. 2; one of Earle's strong figure pieces, No. 38; Potthast's vigorous "Homeward Bound," No. 51, with an exquisite play of light; and the Eatons, both in their own characteristic manner, contribute to the success. The only two female members of the Watercolor Society, Rhoda Holmes Nicholls and Rosina Emmet Sherwood, hold up well with "Motherless," No. 112, and a portrait, No. 180.

Glancing over the whole it is impossible to see a new light appearing. Among the few young practitioners whose early essays are here made public, I see no one who may not be destined to remain a dunce in art or who may henceforth shine amidst a new galaxy of genius. I affect no prescience in these matters. Garrick, in many instances, great as he was in his own art, and quick as he was acknowledged to be in his perceptions, condemned many a young actor who lived to show that his foreknowledge was not infallible. Mrs. Siddons, too, may be quoted as another illustrious instance of equal fallibility in prejudging thus unfavorably of incipient talent. I would therefore not discourage laudable exertion, but rather encourage those performances, which augur favorably of many artists, if they are determined to do justice to themselves.

Matters have moved swiftly in the domain of art these closing years of the century. Art appreciation has well-nigh caught up with the impatient band of impressionists who cast off all the trammels of conventionalism to drag forth the neglected colors of violet, purple, and pink which in some degree are to be found in nature—although not to the extent which they would vain have us believe.

Monet infected a few men, and we got Besnard, Sisley, Pizarro, Renoir, Degas, Montanard. And these again are followed by a new generation: André, D'Espagnat, Fréchon, Loiseau, Maufra, Moret. The work of these latter men is now on exhibition at the Durand-Ruel Galleries. It is good work, as it goes. The many moods of nature are portrayed with a splash and sprawl of color, which makes one blind with filled eyes, which, however, being wiped out, are able to see here and there some charming views.

To the critical sense there comes an emotion, oft of surprise, at the startling wonders of dazzling brilliancy—yet I cannot help but query whether tones and tricks of manner are not accountable for much that is done. For an exposition of the present accomplishment of the luminarists this exhibition is certainly of value.



J. G. BROWN, N. A.

Among what we now know as the older school of American painters, the most prominent individuality is that of J. G. Brown. He is a veteran in whom still burns the fire of youth. Years seem rather to refine and strengthen than enfeeble his hand, and his artistic vision rests unimpaired by the lapse of time. The creator of his own style, it remains superior to the changes of popular taste and artistic fashion, because it reflects the temperament of the artist, strong in its unflagging vitality, as if it had conquered the secret of perpetual youth. Yet Mr. Brown counts his years at more than three score. He was born at Durham, England, in 1891, and began to dabble in colors so early that at the age of nine, as it is recorded, he painted portraits of his mother and sister. After some study in the government art school at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, he entered for a year at the Edinburgh Royal Academy, where he took a prize in 1853. From Edinburgh he journeyed to London, did a little portrait painting, and voyaged over seas to the United States. He opened his first studio in Brooklyn, as a portrait painter, in 1856, and in 1860, when George H. Boughton gave up his studio in New York, Mr. Brown became its tenant, and made his initial exhibit at the National Academy, of which, in 1862, he became an associate, and in 1863 a member. In the National Academy, the Artists' Fund Society, and the American Watercolor Society, he has held the highest offices, and he has been the recipient of many honors at American and European exhibitions. His art is absolutely faithful to the soil. It has been truly said of him that his character studies of American town and country types, treated as they are with the utmost truth to nature, form an invaluable addition to the history of the generation from which the artist won his fortune and the place of distinction which he worthily occupies.

W. A. C.